RESTORATION REVIEW

The Profile of a Pioneer Preacher

Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights. But let us come to the Bible and to the Bible alone, as the only book in creation which can give us all the Light we need! Let us stand together united in the Church of Christ as his disciples and as Christians only.

The beginning of beginning again.

—RACCOON JOHN SMITH

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DANGER BEYOND SMOKING

In an editorial entitled “The Danger Beyond Smoking” the *Saturday Review* (Jan. 24) made some provocative observations. Going beyond the point of smoking being a hazard to health, the editorial raised some moral questions about the apparent indifference of so many smokers to the recent medical reports.

Norman Cousins, the editor, tells of a conversation with a doctor friend who has not quit smoking, but who readily agreed with the findings of the experts regarding the dangers of smoking. “I see the evidence almost every day in hospital wards or among my own patients,” said the physician, “and I have seen enough lung surgery to recognize the difference between the pink, healthy tissue of non-smokers and the discolored, foul tissue of smokers.”

And yet the doctor admitted that he goes on smoking in spite of such facts. Why? And why do people go right on smoking when they know what it may do to them?

The doctor replied that he supposed he kept on smoking for the same reason others do: *they don’t care!*

“It doesn’t make much difference to them if some years are lopped off their life,” he said. “I’m very realistic when I tell you about the probabilities, especially when I point out that their chances of dying from cancer are about ten times greater than if they didn’t smoke. *But they really don’t care.* That’s about the size of it. They really don’t care.”

Mr. Cousins observes that the danger beyond smoking may be more serious than smoking itself. What has happened to a society when so many of its people, for the sake of a habit, will turn a deaf ear to the findings of their own scientists in behalf of health?

The editor asks, “How shallow or profound is their awareness of the potentialities of a fully awakened human being?” He calls for research into the question of how indifferent we have become to life itself. Do we really care whether we live or die? He wonders if there might be a. correlation between abundance and indifference. And is there any relation between this insensitivity to the uniqueness of life and the spread of violence?

Cousins sees this as a basic test for a society: *the ability of both the society and its people to comprehend the principles of human plasticity, human perfectibility and human growth.*

As a high school teacher as well as a college professor, I was especially interested in the reaction to this editorial when a high school teacher read it to her class in Wheaton, Illinois, as reported in the February 29 issue. She had them write out their reaction.

One student said: “If our America is made up of people who don’t care if they live or die, what kind of fight could we give to save our country from such forces as crime, disease, and especially Communism.”

Another wrote: “Not enough people take a stand against gradual suicide,” while another observed: “It is not the evil of smoking itself which disturbs me, but the way in which thousands of Americans disregard the warning, almost impudently defying their mortality.”

Still another: “Indifference does seem to be the American norm as evidenced in poor voting turnouts, dwindling school spirit, as well as unconcern about the tragic problems of so many minority groups, and even health and safety hazards for oneself.”

I doubt, however, if this insistence on smoking despite the dangers is a matter of indifference to either life or health. Man is strongly motivated by the instinct of self-preservation, and he indeed wants to live and be healthy. But he is also a creature of habit, and he will cleave to those habits that have so long been pleasing to him. The answer is, therefore, that the people will quit smoking when they really want to, and they will really want to when they are convinced that smoking will kill them or seriously afflict them. The medical reports reveal that *many* smokers do develop cancer, but *all* do not. It is the old self-deceiving rationale that *it won’t happen here!* It will happen to others, and that’s too bad, but it won’t happen to me!

It is another way of saying that man is willing to take grave risks for the sake of pleasure. Highway deaths may continue to mount, but some will continue to speed --- and some will be found dead sitting on their seat belts. And many, perhaps most, will keep right on smoking --- and they’ll die sooner because of it --- mostly because they do not really believe what they hear.

It is something like hell. Most folk believe there must be something like hell, but no one believes he will go there. Death on the highway, lung cancer, and hell are there all right, but always for the other fellow. Man has a strange way of believing only what he wants to believe.

“Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil.” (Ecc. 8:11)

IS TCU OR ACC LAST?

The state colleges and universities of Texas have been integrated for sometime now, and I know of no difficulties having occurred in any of them of a racial nature. I have had Negroes in my classes at Texas Woman's University all along, and there has not yet been the first sign of any discontent. It has all been done quietly and peaceably, and almost unnoticed.

It appears to be a different story with the Christian colleges. I trust it will not offend anyone segment of our people by including *all* the denominational colleges as "Christian colleges" --- so let it be for the sake of this editorial. These Christian institutions are coming to integration slowly and painfully it seems. My impression is that Christians and their institutions should take the lead in social justice. They should blaze the trail of righteousness, setting the pace for what they sometime call the "godless" state and secular institutions.

Even with the Supreme Court decision, which set the stage for the integration of state schools, the Christians have a terribly hard time keeping up. Only last year did Baylor University, the largest Southern Baptist institution in these parts, commit themselves to integration. At the time of the Baylor announcement, Texas Christian issued a statement that their tuition would increase, with nothing said about integration, to the chagrin of a number of my Disciple friends. "Baylor integrates while TCU raises its tuition", one Christian Church minister complained to me. He was embarrassed, for only the Sunday before he had called for special gifts for Negro education.

But TCU has finally made it! In the *Faculty Bulletin* for January 29, 1964, the officials announced to the faculty that the trustees had voted to accept Negroes into all departments of the university starting next fall. The *Bulletin* describes the trustees' action as "the hard decision" --- one of the greatest crises faced by the board in its 91 years of history. Even then it came only with difficulty. The president had to remind the trustees that only Rice and TCU remain segregated of all the schools in the Southwest Conference, and that Rice remains segregated only because of a restriction in its charter, which they are presently seeking to correct by court order. Well, after two hours of discussion and threats to "table" the motion, our Christian university finally agreed to let the colored folk come to their campus and get a Christian education. In the same world with a Cuba, a South Vietnam, an India, a Malaysia, a Cyprus, the Christian trustees nobly faced their crisis --- one of their most difficult --- of deciding to extend their educational facilities to include Negroes!

Now that the Christian educators in Fort Worth have endured their blood, sweat, and tears, how about the Christians in Abilene?

It has been an interesting race to see which of our Christian colleges in Texas would be the last to integrate. I thought for awhile it would be a dead-heat between Texas Christian and Abilene Christian. But ACC will make it; just give them time. Already they have

ventured so far as to admit a few Negroes into their graduate school, and before long the colored folk will be able to go to ACC just like they can attend these godless and sectarian institutions.

"And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Mat. 5:47)

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Mormon Folk and "Church of Christ" Folk . . .

SPAGHETTI WITH MORMONS

A friend was so kind' as to give me tickets to a spaghetti dinner at the new Church of Christ of Latter-Day Saints here in Denton. I was glad to get to go, whether at my, friend's expense or my own, not only because I like spaghetti, but also because I like people, including Mormons. It also gave me a chance to get a close look at their fashionable new edifice. The Mormons are concentrating on university cities, and Denton is but one among many college towns in America where new buildings are being built.

The non-Mormon who wrote a book entitled *These Amazing Mormons* has the right description. It has always been a source of amazement to me that they could create a "restored gospel" from the fantastic story of Joseph Smith and the angel Moroni and win converts to it throughout the world. Presently they have 13,000 missionaries scattered throughout most of the countries of the world. The ministry of their church is about as free of professionalism as a denomination could be. Even the missionaries go out self-supported. Each Mormon is expected to tithe, which provides for a welfare system that almost defies description. No Mormon has to beg, and each one knows that if the worst comes the saints will take care of him; the church gives all their unemployed a job, even if it is nothing but sticking labels on canned goods to be distributed to the poor.

Every male Mormon is expected to give two years of his life as a missionary for the church, and now the women are getting into the act. This year 1,000 women are out telling the story of the "restored gospel." The chances are that Mormon elders have come to your door, perhaps more than once. They convert something like 60,000 people each year. They started in 1831 and by 1906 they had over 200,000 members. Today they number about one and a half million, not counting the Reorganized Church in Missouri.

Their new church here in Denton is as elegant and utilitarian as any edifice one would expect to find anywhere, perhaps the finest in this city. It had such a professional touch about it that I suspected the plans came out of Salt Lake. Not only was this confirmed by my visit, but I also learned that headquarters also sent the engineer to build it. The man

stays busy all time, going from city to city building Mormon churches. The building is but the first unit of a rather elaborate layout, which will eventually include a gymnasium and ballroom, fellowship hall, etc. It is their policy to provide entertainment for their youth on the church grounds. Their dances and sports open with a prayer. Say what you will about this, the fact is that juvenile delinquency is almost non-existent among them and divorce is something that they only hear about — and when their youth grow up they are still in the Mormon church!

Now, aren't they amazing? But the most amazing feature is their history. You should follow them from western New York in the days of Joe Smith and Sidney Rigdon into Illinois and Missouri and finally into Utah with Brigham Young. The fabulous story, which includes rugged courage, unbelievable hardship and heartbreak and sordid tales of polygamy and murder, is a fantastic chapter. in American history. When we were at Harvard my wife spent days going through *Tell It All*, written by a highly intelligent woman who did indeed tell it all — how her husband was converted to Mormonism and was finally led to take other wives. She described the heartbreak she felt when her husband of many years left her side to sleep with his second wife, who was young and pretty — all of course in the name of the Lord! My wife wept all the way through it.

If their history is fantastic, their doctrines are even more so. They baptize each other in behalf of people who have long been dead, claiming that 1 Cor. 15:29 supports such a practice. They have at least three "inspired" books to look to besides the Bible, and they have a president (the church's High Priest) who receives still further revelations. They have upward of a dozen temples, at least one of which cost six million dollars, in which there are secret rooms in which couples may enter into celestial wedlock. For a generation or two the Mormons lived polygamously for *both* time and eternity, until plurality of wives was forbidden by the government. Even now however the Mormons can look forward to a heavenly bliss of celestial polygamy.

Their doctrine of man is one of the most peculiar in the history of ideas, which in the final analysis makes man (Adam) himself God. Souls await in celestial spheres to be born, thus the reason for polygamy. Man is destined to rule as a god with his celestial wives enthroned as queens. The theories become quite involved, but it is apparent how important polygamy is to the system of Mormonism. Brigham Young is quoted in *Wife No. 19* (a book the Mormons seek to destroy) as saying that Jesus was a polygamist, that Martha and Mary were his wives, and that the marriage at Cana was his own. Sex has been dominant in Mormon history, so much so that a Freudian psychologist might find it a fruitful area in which to test his theories.

Well, the spaghetti was tasty enough, and the friendly repast with my neighborly Mormons was even better. Later I was visited by two lovely, intelligent girls of college age who are in Texas from Salt Lake, serving their time as missionaries. I did my best to get

these girls to assure me that the Christ and the Bible were sufficient for light and life, but they would not. To be within the fellowship of God I need more than the Christ and his Word, for I must accept the "restored gospel" brought by the angel Moroni to Joseph Smith. I went so far as to suggest that we enroll Joe Smith as a prophet, if they wanted it that way, but that it is still in the Christ and only in Him that there is salvation. Neither will this do. One must accept Moroni's revelations that led to the organization of the Mormon church in order to be what God wants him to be. It all boils down to accepting the Mormon church as the right one. Unless one does this he might not even go to heaven at all, much less bask in the bliss of celestial marriage, whether with one woman or many. The loss of the latter prospect is indeed disconcerting!

Since this rendezvous with the Mormons I have been thinking about ourselves. I must not suggest, of course, that we are like the Mormons, who indeed have an angel from heaven preaching a different gospel. But there are some respects in which the "Church of Christ" is like the Mormons. We too preach a "we are the true church" gospel more than the Christian gospel. Like the Mormons, we talk of the right church, right name, right organization, and right worship — and, like the Mormons, we make this kind of thing the basis of Christian fellowship" And I don't believe a word of it, whether preached by the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" in Denton or the "Church of Christ" in Denton, the "Latter-Day" or "Former-Day" Saints!

We are not content to receive one into "the fellowship" simply upon his confession that Jesus is the Christ and his baptism into the Christ. He must also be *right* about a long list of things that we make tests of fellowship, and our several different factions differ as to what these things are. We call ourselves "unsectarian" while we lay down stipulations for fellowship that go far beyond the profession of Jesus as Lord. One must wear the *right* name, and the church must be named like we name ours; he must be right about instrumental music, the Lord's day, the millennium, organization, and a score of other things.

Like the Mormons, who will receive no one into Christian fellowship until he accepts all the trappings of Mormonism, just so we do not accept saints of God (yes, *saints* of God, people who are as much Christian as we are) unless they accept all the trappings of Church of Christ teaching. Like the Mormons, we preach our church as much or more than we preach the Christ — and there just big difference between the two!

A preacher from one of the big churches in Dallas was preaching by radio on what one must do to be a Christian. After outlining the five steps of the plan of salvation he proceeded to list other things the Christian must do, and anyone who knows the Church of Christ *song and dance* could follow each step. He said that for one to be a Christian he must *lay by in store* on the first day of the week as God has prospered him, quoting 1 Cor. 16:2.

That one point leaves out my wife and me, for as often as not we mail our check to the congregation's secretary once each month, which may not be a Sunday at all, and we only occasionally drop our check in a basket on a Lord's Day. We are not Christians according to both "Church of Christ" and Mormon doctrines, for according to "Church of Christ" doctrine we are not obeying 1 Cor. 16:2, and according to Mormon doctrine we are supporting a sectarian church, as any non-Mormon church would be. That last reason would do for the 'Church of Christ" too, for any non-Church of Christ is a sectarian church — as are many "Churches of Christ", depending on which faction you belong to!

If you ask me point blank if I believe that *both* the Mormon church and our own "Church of Christ" are *sects,* the answer is *yes!* I love the Mormons deeply, and most certainly I am especially devoted to our own "Church of Christ" people, believing many of them to be as fine Christians as can be found anywhere (and I do believe there are others elsewhere!), and yet I would urge both groups alike to lay aside their demands for conformity to their peculiar doctrines as basis for fellowship.

Both groups are factious because they make their interpretation of the church, with its work, organization and worship, necessary to fellowship, if not salvation itself.

Both groups are sects in that they have created a System, including a clearly-defined creed, that they insist upon as grounds for Christian brotherhood. Neither will accept a man or another congregation upon the simple profession of Christ as Lord and baptism. Both preach an "iffy" gospel: *if* you do as we do on this and *if* you believe as we do on that, then we'll receive you. Both groups, of course, have an infallible interpretation of the scriptures, which gives them the right to draw such lines on fellow Christians. After all, there is no argument against being *right.* You are simply to accept it!

It is debatable as to which group is more enslaved and blinded by their audacities and prejudices. My Mormon girls, bless their hearts, said they *knew* Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that the Mormon church is right. They furthermore assured me that I too would be made to *see* it someday. I always find it difficult to have dialogue with certitude, for dialogue implies a *search* for truth, and those who have already arrived are not in that search.

Early in the "dialogue" I asked the girls if they had carefully studied any of the reasonable and responsible treatments of Mormonism by a non-Mormon, such things as an examination of the anachronisms of the Book of Mormon or the Spaulding-Rigdon Manuscript. They said they had not, but they thought maybe they could. But those dear girls won't and they can't — not and stay in the System.

But are the Mormons any more certain than most of our own brethren. Have you tried a dialogue with a typical "Church of Christ" member? I say *typical,* for these days there are more and more nonconformists that the keepers-of-orthodoxy are having trouble corralling. Well, the *typical* brother is no less convinced and no less blinded than the

Mormon. Both are in the *only right church* and they KNOW it. There is no need for such ones to search for truth.

Until they make some radical changes in attitude, neither of these groups will make any substantial contribution to a united congregation of believers. Though they may compass sea and land to gain proselytes for their own churches, they will contribute little toward the unity of all believers. Rather each one, from his own sectarian corner, will issue affirmations that the answer to the problem of a divided Christendom is after all a simple one: *all the rest of the Christian world is to conform to our likeness.*

But I love them both — spaghetti or no spaghetti — and I shall continue to be a brother to both to the extent that they'll let me.

"First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pet. 1:20-21) — *The Editor*

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Comment on Louis Cochran's RACCOON JOHN SMITH . . .

THE PROFILE OF A PIONEER PREACHER

In a recent letter Louis Cochran, author of *Raccoon John Smith*, wrote as follows to this editor:

> "The great significance of John Smith, a fact largely overlooked by our Brotherhood, is that the Brotherhood (including all its divisions) probably would not have come into existence at all had it not been for him. It was 'Raccoon John', and none else, who took the leadership in the 'union' effected between the 'Disciples' under Campbell and the 'Christians' under B. W. Stone. And had that union not taken place, and had not John Smith and John Rogers ridden over the state together for the next three years preaching unity, and bringing the different congregations together, there would have been no Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, or Church of Christ. That momentous meeting at Lexington under the leadership of John Smith on January 1, 1832 was the birth date of the 'Restoration Movement', and as John is quoted as saying, 'the beginning of beginning again'."

It is probably true that the Restoration Movement would never have gotten off the ground had it not been for the work of Raccoon John Smith, and consequently the several wings of the Restoration brotherhood would not be in existence today. Not only do our various disciple groups owe much to this old pioneer in Christian unity, but the entire ecumenical movement is indebted to him. It may well be, as Cochran suggests in his book,

that the union he helped to create between two disparate parties is the first instance of church unity in the history of Christianity.

All of this has *historic* significance in that it is the story of conflicting parties uniting into the one body of Christ, and it has *practical* significance in that it serves as an example of how unity can be effected. The Stoneites or New Lights, under Barton W. Stone, and the Reformed Baptists or Disciples, under Raccoon John Smith and John T. Johnson, were as divergent in their views, yea even *farther* apart doctrinally, than are any of our groups today. Yet they were able to create a united front that so strengthened the Restoration effort in Kentucky as to assure its survival. If they could unite their divided forces for an effective waging of peace for the Lord, why cannot we do so too? How did they do it and what was the role of Raccoon John Smith? Louis Cochran's latest novel, *Raccoon John Smith,* tells the story.

This union between *Reformers* and *Christians* was very early in our history. Both of these movements in Kentucky were *before* the emergence of Alexander Campbell. Stone had already separated from the Presbyterians (or "put out" by them as he explained it) and Raccoon John had already begun his reformation among Baptist churches well before either of them had ever heard of Alexander Campbell, and some of this work was underway before Campbell arrived in America. By 1832 Campbell was, of course, much in the picture, and he was rapidly becoming the leader of the fragmented, unorganized, and confused Restoration efforts. It was a movement badly in need of congealment. The history of Restoration, which is almost as old as Christianity itself, is replete with noble efforts of reform that died out from lack of solidification. It is likely that the 19th century Restoration forces would likewise have fizzled had it not been for what happened in Kentucky under the guidance of this roughly-hewed, unschooled pioneer preacher.

By 1832 there were about 8,000 Stoneites and some 10,000 Reformers. Campbell had visited among these movements and had some influence with both groups, especially through his publications, but it was hardly possible that Campbell could have ever blended them into one body. After one excursion into Kentucky he could write as follows about some of the Stoneite churches:

> Many of the congregations called "Christians" are just as sound in the faith of Jesus as the only begotten son of God, in the plain import of these terms, as any congregations with which I am acquainted.
>
> With all such, I, as an individual, am united, and would rejoice in seeing all the immersed disciples of the Son of God, called "Christians," and walking in all the commandments of the Lord and Saviour.

> We plead for the union, communion, and cooperation of all such; and wherever there are in any vicinity a remnant of those who keep the commandments of Jesus, whatever may have been their former designation, they ought to rally under Jesus and the Apostles, and bury all dissensions . . . (Mill. Harb. 2, p. 558)

We have said that if these reformatory parties in Kentucky could get together, then all of our present segments should be able to unite. The Reformers disagreed with the Stoneites on what was erroneously interpreted as Arianism, one of the ancient heresies of the church regarding the person of Christ; and they also objected to the Stoneite practice of receiving the unimmersed. The Stoneites in turn thought the Reformers placed too much stress on immersion, for they seemed to believe that one could not go to heaven without baptism. The two groups differed on "baptism for the remission of sins" and on the name to be worn by Jesus' followers. The Reformers also accused the Stoneites of believing in conversion by "the Spirit alone," while the Stoneites pointed to the Reformers as believing in "the Word alone."

How could such disparate parties ever get together?

They had the one essential point in common: *their love for the Christ and their desire to unite on the basis of the gospel apart from any human creed.* They both saw faith and baptism (immersion) as the basis of entrance into the kingdom. They were able to start here and work toward unity.

While Cochran's novel does not go beyond the time of the Lexington unity meeting, the history of our movement reveals how difficult it was for them to carry out the decisions agreed upon at the meeting. The leaders of both groups were bitterly attacked by their own people as betrayers and compromisers. The two churches in Lexington got together at first, but within a few months they were split again, and it was another three years before they were able to effect the union in that city on permanent basis. Such was the threat throughout the state. As Cochran says in the above letter, it was only when Raccoon John and John Rogers (on the Stone side) got into their saddles and visited every church in the state *of both groups,* urging unity, that the first Christian union in history was made certain.

Cochran thrills his readers in telling this part of the Raccoon story, all of which is true to history. He recounts the private meeting between Raccoon John, John T. Johnson, and John Rogers which led to the public unity conclave between the two churches. Decision was also made that Johnson and Stone would become co-editors as a further effort to congeal their two parties.

Then Cochran describes the four-day union meeting between brethren that had hardly ever dreamed that their churches could be one great Restoration Movement. The novelist puts his finger on the very attitude that must also prevail among us if we are to unite our warring factions: "Their very frankness revealed a burning, passionate longing for

understanding, for tolerance of their views, a tolerance they would in turn give to those of differing opinions."

It was a precious moment in our history when Raccoon John Smith stood before that unity meeting and said, "Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights. But let us come to the Bible and to the Bible alone, as the only book in creation which can give us all the Light we need! Let us stand together united in the Church of Christ as his disciples and as Christians only."

From the audience there were shouts of "Hallelujah" and "Amen! Amen!" mingled with cries and utterances of emotion too deep for words. There stood Smith and Stone together, with hands clasped in gesture of the new spirit of brotherhood that prevailed, while the audience sang "All hail the power of Jesus' name." It was indeed a great hour!

As Cochran puts it: "Here at last was that unity for which Christ had prayed, the first voluntary union of two entirely separate religious communions in the history of the world as known to man."

Raccoon said to his wife, "It's the end of the struggle, Nancy. The perfect church! January 1, 1832, will be a great day in history. Nothing can stop the sweep of victory."

"At least, it's a beginning," Nancy replied. "But perfection's mighty hard to come by. Somehow we never quite make it."

John looked at her a moment, and then he sobered. Nancy was right. The complete victory was a long way off. "It was the beginning of beginning again," he said.

And so Louis Cochran concludes the fabulous story of Raccoon John, the pioneer preacher who had a passion for the unity of God's people.

Yet this book is much more than the story of a unity effort. It is even more than a portrait of a lovable back-woods preacher on the American frontier. It is a story of a search for freedom, which Hegel says all history is. It is a story of an honest man's struggles with his own conscience and soul against imponderable prejudice and hate. It is another thrilling chapter in the story of America's frontier life with all its triumph and tragedy.

Pioneer life breathes from every page with references to corn-husking bees, squirrel soup, bear-oil lamps, clapboard roofs, pole beds, and corn shuck mattresses. Raccoon bought a farm with "forty assorted skins and fifty dollars of hard money." You watch them make soap, shoes, bullets, clothes, and even silver spoons. The neighbors gather for "cabin raisin'" and up goes the log cabin, with minute descriptions of how they did it. Since this story goes back nearly 200 years in American history there are meaningful references to Franklin and Washington, Paine and Monroe, Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson. In the streets of Lexington, Raccoon on one occasion sees General Jackson and President Monroe. In the same group of celebrities was Col. Richard M. Johnson, who later became vice-president and who was a brother of John T. Johnson, the evangelist and co-laborer with Raccoon. Cochran does not neglect to make a point of the enmity that existed

between “Old Hickory” Jackson and Henry Clay. On another day even General Lafayette was coming to town.

And the author makes it clear that the pioneers of early nineteenth century America had a lingo all their own. Ma Smith says to her son Raccoon as he begins to waver in the family’s Calvinistic Baptist faith: “Some day, please God, you’ll know that, John, or you’ll stick your horn in a bog.” Her son accuses her of mixing Scotch and Irish, suggesting that she talk “plain American.” Well, their “plain American” gets interesting. You find them busy with the sang hoe, honing a knife on the whetstone, tightening the horse’s cinch belt, drinking “stout usquebaugh ladled out at the shivaree” and even giving “a wallop on a woman’s behind after the preacher said the binding words” and raising a passel of youn’uns.

The story begins with Raccoon as a teenager having a hard time getting a religious experience satisfactory to himself and the rock-ribbed Calvinistic church of his family. Finally he has an experience that seems to be all right, though not as sensational as the usual ones, and from there he becomes a preacher for the Baptists, though hardly ever an orthodox one. It is amidst his misgivings about the Philadelphia *Confession of Faith* that he first hears of Alexander Campbell, who is four years his junior. “Who is Alexander Campbell?”, he asks, and from then on the Raccoon-Campbell angle of the story is most fascinating, especially the accounts of the *Christian Baptist* first falling into Raccoon’s hands and the first meeting between the two men.

This interesting novel, rooted in historical facts, will move you to both tears and laughter. Raccoon was a man who learned the meaning of loneliness as he worked among brethren who did not understand. He learned to bear the agonizing cross of losing two of his babies in a cruel cabin fire, and then had to sit by and watch his beloved wife die of grief. Following all this he himself was stricken to the point of death. Even more cruel than all this were the broken promises of his own brethren who were willing to see him suffer because he was different.

But your sorrow turns to laughter when the lovable Raccoon pulls off some of his antics, the kind of humor that made his kind of life bearable. Once while in a tavern with two Methodist preachers who were making a public display of their piety by a long prayer over their cherry bounce, Raccoon picked up the man’s glass and in one swallow emptied it. When reproached for his sin by the preacher who had lost his drink, ole Raccoon’s eyes widened in innocence as he said: “It’s a lesson in biblical discipline. You two Methodist preachers forgot that the Good Book says ye must watch as well as pray!”

He gave Methodist ministers a hard time of it. On another occasion after witnessing a Methodist preacher sprinkle a crying infant, Raccoon took the preacher by the arm and proceeded to immerse him in a nearby creek. When the minister rebelled, Raccoon reminded him that he had baptized the baby against its will and so it was only fair that he

should have the same thing done to him! As for Methodist ministers, Cochran tells of several contacts that Raccoon had with the famous circuit-rider, Peter Cartwright.

The incident that got the chuckles out of our family was Raccoon's reaction to a preacher named Bitt, who showed how much religion he had by all sorts of gymnastics in the pulpit: "He skipped and kicked and spun about on the narrow platform, and then leaped over its low railing and ran up and down among the people, jumping over benches and stools, at times singing, pushing a hesitating sinner to his knees, jerking erect a saved one, slain before the Lord." Raccoon watched all this in wild-eyed wonder, realizing that it was this kind of religion that the folks expected him to get. Turning away in disgust he remarked to one of his friends: "Brother Bitt had a fit, a spasm. If I hadn't of knowed the reason, I would have tied him up. I'd a roped him like a bucking steer to keep him from hurting himself."

There is a reason why the rugged lad named John Smith was called Raccoon. He looked the part, so much so that three mischievous boys once greeted him with one of them crying out, "Good morning, Father Abraham." After scampering about and circling him as he walked, another shouted, "Good morning, Father Isaac." The third lad got his turn at the strange. looking preacher with a "Good morning, Father Jacob."

After twice returning the greeting with some air of solemnity, Raccoon finally turned on the boys with: "Good morning, boys. But you are mistaken. I am not Father Abraham, nor am I Father Isaac nor Father Jacob. My name is Saul, son of Kish, and I was sent to search for my father's three lost jackasses. And lo, I have found them." And then he grabbed at them, but the boys, startled for a moment, wheeled and raced away as though pursued.

You will come to love and admire Louis Cochran's Raccoon John Smith, who is indeed the real Raccoon John in our Disciple history. You will share in his triumphs and his sorrows. You will respect him for his determination to get a few months of schooling in the raw frontier life of the Kentucky hills, even when it meant sitting in a one-room cabin school with kids half his size. You will admire his keen mind and ready wit, and especially will you love him for his loyalty to his own convictions and his courage to think for himself. He was always plain ole Raccoon who dared to be different. He admired Alexander Campbell as much as he did anybody, but even the Sage of Bethany had to prove his points before Raccoon would accept them.

One of his noblest traits is one that Cochran characterizes so well: his love for those who opposed him and his patience with the church folk with whom he grew up. "If separation comes," Raccoon said of his Baptist brethren, "they"ll do the leaving; it won't be me." He always thought of himself as a good Baptist — *a reforming* Baptist perhaps. The practice of some present-day brethren of treating Baptists as outsiders, insisting that

they must be re-immersed in order to be Christians and part of the Restoration Movement would cause a Raccoon John Smith to shudder in horror.

The truth is that our fractured brotherhood that even demands the rebaptism of those from different segments of the Restoration Movement can hardly claim kinship to Raccoon John Smith. Cochran's novel serves to show how a man, overwhelmed by the evil of partyism, can work for unity and brotherhood *within the framework of a party* by rising above sectarianism by way of loyalty to his own conscience and devotion to the will of God. If the Baptists in Kentucky needed Raccoon John Smith 150 years ago, the Restoration Movement of our day certainly needs him, and for the same reasons.

His wife Nancy had a way of saying to her husband a word of wisdom that might well be considered the watchword of Raccoon's life, for he found himself thinking about it at critical moments.

"You don't have to be a great man, John, to be used of God. You just have to be willing."

Raccoon was willing. — *The Editor*

(*Raccoon John Smith* can be purchased from Restoration Review, 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas at $4.95).

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RECENT REACTIONS

I have heard of this magazine before and had read the great article (reprint) "Fruit in His Season" by Mrs. Hibbett, but I had not seen a complete issue before now. I am amazed at the number of ideas contained in these fine publications which had already presented themselves to me. Hoping to avoid the old pitfall of saying this publication is great because it agrees with me, I can nevertheless sincerely congratulate you and your staff. — *Louisiana*

I have read articles from time to time and have found them stimulating and incisive. I pray the Lord will bless this ministry to the unifying of brethren everywhere. — *Minnesota*

The February issue was refreshing and thrilling. Surely a new day is dawning for the Lord's saints. Someone has said, "A mind stretched by a new truth never returns to its former size." How true! — *Missouri*

Your publication is cogently involved in the central issues of contemporary Christian thought, not only for Restorationists, but for all of the genuine ecumenical spirit. — *Tennessee*

I don't want to miss any articles. I have had everyone of your books from *Bible Talk* till now. — *Illinois*

Are you going to be able to make the monthly as good as the old quarterly? I hope so, for it was one of the very few I could afford time to read. May our Father grant you all success. — *New Mexico*

In your zeal to emphasize the importance of the person of Jesus and His Lordship, for which in itself I have nothing but praise, you have inadvertently, I think, left the impression that there is a difference in recognizing the authority of the person of Jesus and recognizing the authority of Jesus' written words. — *Oklahoma*

Restoration Review was handed to me by a friend. I enjoyed reading it so very much. I am sending my club of six. — *Kansas*

I want to add that I believe your article on the Bible being the basis of unity is the *best* article that I have ever read on the subject, and I thoroughly agree with you. I get so tired of the old bromides that I lose interest in many if not most, sermons that I hear. — *Ohio*

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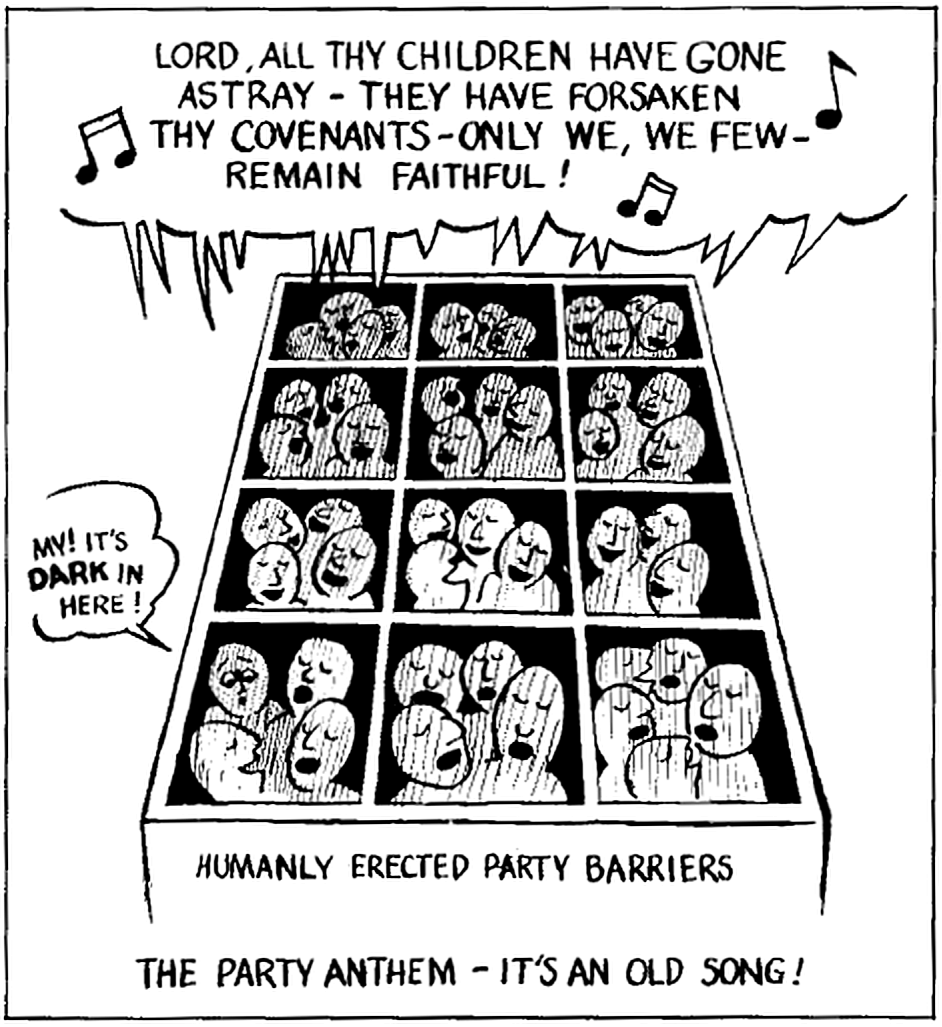
THE PARTY ANTHEM

Are you in this picture? The chances are that you are. If you are not, then your role is to help the many of us that are in it to get out. So this picture has something to say to us all.

It is an amusing picture in a way, isn't it? They all seem to be talking or singing the party theme song, which might be entitled *The Loyal Church Anthem.* Perhaps they should do more listening, but none seems to be doing that. It is difficult for the *listening* man to be a party man. He has to keep talking — or singing — for otherwise he might do some thinking.

And they are in darkness, though they appear to be oblivious to it, except the poor jerk who cries out, "My!


LORD, ALL THY CHILDREN HAVE GONE ASTRAY - THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THY COVENANTS - ONLY WE, WE FEW - REMAIN FAITHFUL!
MY! IT'S DARK IN HERE!
HUMANLY ERECTED PARTY BARRIERS
THE PARTY ANTHEM - IT'S AN OLD SONG!

it's DARK in here!" Something good might happen to him — or will it be something bad? — now that he sees the way things really are. He looks troubled, doesn't he? The others appear happy and contented. Is it not better to be at ease than troubled? The brother might save himself a lot of grief if he will join the others in the party anthem and forget about how dark it is. If he starts thinking, he might start asking questions, and then he'll be in real trouble. Socrates told us that "The unexamined life is not worth living," and he could have added that the *examined* life, though worth living, is realized only through painful ordeal.

They appear to ignore each other, even if they are aware of each other's presence, as they sing along in the party chorus. The words of the anthem are the same — and how often we have all heard each stanza! You know, *"the Lord's people, loyal church, the Truth, faithful congregation, gospel preacher,* and many other pleasant phrases are given the party slant. And each faction is in proper tune — *within* that particular faction at least, for no dissonant notes are allowed within the party: *all must be of the same mind and speak the same thing.* That is scripture, and the party says that means that all the members

have to see everything alike. (That brother down in the southwestern part of the country had better get back in line and quit talking about how dark it is!)

It is a cheerful picture in a way. They are all religious folk. And they are singing. They are happy — or so it seems. The only one that looks other than happy is that poor brother that has quit singing the party anthem. If he doesn't watch, the others will be looking at him, wondering what has gotten into him. But he'll not likely bother those in the other stalls, for *he is not one of them!*

Really now, is it nice for that fellow to be different like that? Everybody is happy and contented, and he has to go spoiling things. He's a troublemaker, isn't he? Why doesn't he just go on off and not bother the others? Dare he go around spoiling the peace and harmony of "the church" like that! It is a good way to get in trouble. The brethren might rock him to sleep — and he has it coming.

Let's make a prediction here. Our troubled brother will be tossed out on his ear — unless he lines up, which he isn't likely to do, startled by the darkness like he is. The charge will, of course, be heresy. Once he's out he'll be able to see even better. He will then realize that where he was is even darker than he thought. Then he'll find all these other brothers that he didn't realize he had. And those he left will be glad he's gone — and they'll go on singing their anthem, hoping that the troublemaker will leave them alone.

Our heretical brother is really a benevolent soul — a bit naive perhaps, but benevolent just the same. Look at him there: he is not really a heretic; he just wonders why it has to be so dark. He doesn't realize yet that the reason the others are not conscious of the darkness is that they have their eyes closed. Had he just kept his eyes closed he too would have remained oblivious to it all, and he could have continued in the party anthem. But now he sees — at least he has some light. He wants to share it. I told you that he was a benevolent soul even if a bit naive.

He is also an optimistic lad. He has dreams of removing the party barriers, even though he finds them well entrenched. He tries to get the different factions to speak to each other — or even to pay any attention at all to each other. After all, they are all brothers, he reasons, why can't they treat each other that way. He wants them to stop the party cries long enough to sit down and get acquainted with each other. Perhaps they can pray together — or just sit with each other. Maybe they can learn how to listen . . . and *study to be quiet.* Yes, all of them, he figures, might refrain from the parry song long enough to *wait on the Lord.* They're too noisy!

There they are. It's disgusting in a way. Each one is the loyal church — each of the others is a faction! They go around debating each other, and even call each other bad names. Each cell has its own "loyal paper" and "loyal colleges". They are so well fortified against each other. The walls of separation are rather thick as you can see.

And yet they all talk about unity. To be sure, that is part of the party anthem. They talk, pray and sing about unity. Each cell tells the others that unity can be had when they make up their minds to go by the Bible. “Just take the Book for what it says,” they all chime to each other. Each one can’t understand why the others are so blind, for it is all right there in the Bible just as plain as can be!

They talk a lot about “the dividing wedge” — things like organs, societies, premillennialism, institutions, classes, cups, saucers and stuff. But our brother who has opened his eyes is beginning to wonder if these things are the real cause of the separations, for he knows that each clique has its own party squabbles and disagreements. He knows that each cell could multiply its divisions several times *if it wanted to.* He is suspicious that these brethren separate from each other *because they want to* - because of their indifference, their lack of love, their jealousy and carnality. Organs and orphanages do not divide brethren who love each other. It is the way brethren feel toward each other that causes them to split.

Our poor, naive brother wanders amongst them all. He finds that they’ll all talk to him more freely than they will those in another cell, even though none will fully accept him. He mixes and mingles with them all, but joins in the parry anthem of none. But he soon discovers that the task is a formidable one. His most sobering realization is that each party is content to remain a party. They have no real interest in unity, for each one is satisfied with the way things are.

And yet there appears to be a gleam of light in each cell, for *some* are not satisfied with the divided state of affairs. Our naive brother is no longer so naive, for his experience has been both sobering and maturing. He comes to realize that even a divided brotherhood is not formidable to the Holy Spirit of God. He comes to believe that barriers built by hate can be crushed by love. He is convinced that a parry anthem can be stilled by the voice of kindness.

“I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13) .

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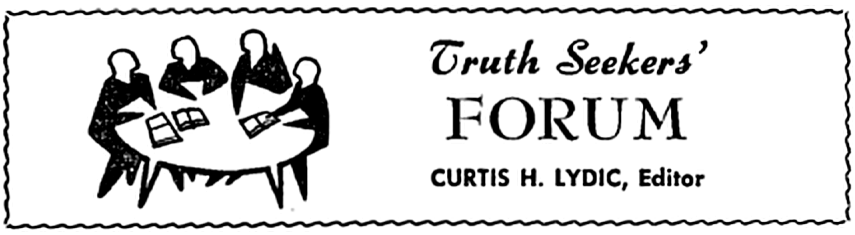

UNITY IN THE CHRIST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I thank God for preserving me from that part of the Church of Christ which proclaims itself the one, true, infallible body of Christ on earth. I must confess that the only baptism I have ever received was at the hands of an ordained Baptist "pastor" after receiving a favorable vote to be received into the membership of a Baptist church. I cannot, however, be a party to any sect, and that includes the Baptists as well as the Campbellites.

Therefore, it takes no great courage for me to subscribe to the *Restoration Review* and to the position on fellowship generally advocated therein. Indeed I agree with the eminent Disciple, Professor W. E. Garrison, who is quoted by the editor as saying that the Lordship of Christ is the basis of unity among all Christians.

However, I have noted a failure, or perhaps an oversight, on the part of the *Review* in dealing with a vital part of the obviously thorny unity problem. I refer to the lack of definition of or discussion of the content of our confession of Christ and its relevance to Christian unity.

Perhaps we are still inhibited by the ancient Restoration aversion to theological formulations. At any rate I personally cannot see how we can continue to avoid the issue by a simple, rather naive call for a united confession of Jesus as Lord, Christ, or Son of God. The ancient Gnostics, as well as modern counterparts, certainly professed faith in Jesus, but the Apostle John leaves us no room to doubt that he did not consider himself in fellowship with them (II John 7-11). Or, turning to Paul, we are told that the sufficiency of salvation by grace through faith in Christ must be maintained and that those who do not so maintain it have "fallen from grace" (Gal. *5:*4). I fear that the gospel as preached in the Churches of Christ has often been compromised in this manner.

It may be argued that the Christological formulations of the ancient creeds are not binding as terms of fellowship. I agree. At the same time the testimony of the Apostles to Jesus is binding. This is how the New Testament may legitimately be used as a basis for fellowship, or rather for testing to determine if fellowship exists. This is not to say that agreement upon all or even any particular detail of the New Testament is essential to fellowship in Christ. I am saying that the Church has always realized that we have no means of knowing Christ apart from the testimony of those men who knew him.

To summarize briefly the point of this little essay, discussion of fellowship must always center in Christ, but that demands a definition of Christ. And any definition of Christ which plainly contradicts or omits certain testimony of the New Testament regarding Christ must be declared defective. No hope of either salvation or fellowship can be placed in a Christ so defined. — *Skolops*

WHAT IS DENOMINATIONALISM?

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *This brief set of questions comes to us from a Missouri reader, M.M. Consider his questions carefully, please, and let us know if you believe you have answers for them. This general theme will be further developed in subsequent issues of the FORUM.)*

1. What is denominationalism? Is it simply any religious group other than ourselves? How many non-denominational Christian groups can there be?
2. Is denominationalism defined by a national headquarters and a "sectarian" name, or is it an exclusivist attitude?
3. Is it proper to use the term, "the brotherhood," in a narrow and restrictive sense? If brotherhood is based on sonship to God, is it not incorrect to use the expression "the brotherhood" to mean anything less than all God's children? Isn't our misuse of the term "the brotherhood" actually an expression which conveys the same idea as "our denomination"?
4. How could Christians actually be non-denominational? Is this possible? Can a group be non-denominational by refusing to commit its creeds to writing, refusing to acknowledge a formal ecclesiastical group larger than the local congregation, and proclaiming, "We are not a denomination"?

A SUGGESTION

Is it possible that tradition or custom has ingrained in us a loyalty to one particular translation of the scriptures? If so, do you think that this is a healthy thing? I think not. We may be severely hampered both in our search for the truth and in our teaching if we are dependent upon one version. How much of our conviction must be supported by reference to a passage in one version only? Any idea which depends upon one translation's exact wording of a verse is doubtless of little value.

It seems almost fantastic to me that Christians have clung for centuries to the King James Version, with an almost idolatrous reverence for it. Some seem to think that any other translation is not a true Bible, that King James language was the language of Jesus and his apostles. Yet the language of the KJV makes it possibly the most difficult of all translations to understand. For the novice student, many passages might as well be deliberately coded — they are so obscure that he needs to be a cryptographer to decipher them. Indeed, the person who can understand the knottiest verses of the KJV can do so only because of training and/or long experience. Furthermore, the KJV is faulty in its renderings and sometimes misleading (for example, it calls the Passover "Easter" and has King Agrippa on the verge of accepting Paul's gospel). Certainly its mistakes, though, are not so serious a matter as its obscuring vital meanings in so many of its passages. Isn't it

possible that using a translation which employs contemporary, familiar language would make for faster growth in Bible knowledge? Yes, I suggest that each Christian have a copy of a more recent translation to study. He will find it more reliable and helpful than the King James or American Standard Versions.

QUESTIONS

If, in 1 Cor. 7, "only in the Lord" means that widows can remarry only a Christian, does Eph. 6:1 limit obedience of children to Christian parents? — *T.L.K.*

In Acts 20:7-12, for what sort of "breaking of bread" did the disciples assemble? It says that when they came together Paul spoke to them, and prolonged his speech until midnight. After Eurychus' accident, Paul went back upstairs and broke bread and ate, and talked a while longer, until daybreak. So Eutychus must have fallen about midnight. Did the disciples then break bread with Paul after midnight, and was this still the first day of the week? Did the early disciples regard the observance of the Lord's Supper as being necessarily restricted to the first day of the week? I don't see how we can be so sure that this *was* the Lord's Supper, nor that they were so careful to observe that feast on the first day of the week. I would like to know what some others think. — *A. A. D.*

Is it possible for the scientists to be right about evolution without contradicting the Bible? Is it possible that the earth may have existed for millions of years before the acts of God recorded in Gen. 1 and 2? If so, could some evolution of species have taken place then? Could this account for all the ancient fossils which have been discovered, including those which seem to be remnants of some sort of men, like cave men? — *M. Q. F.*

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You will not want to miss the next issue of RESTORATION REVIEW. *Some of the subjects to be discussed:* BLESSED DEATH: THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE; HOW TO COMMUNE WITH GOD; ON BEING CONVERTED THREE WAYS; AN OPEN LETTER TO A DIVIDED BROTHERHOOD; A UNITY PLEA SPELLED OUT.

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